

Earth First!



"We are free from today...Paralyse the country, you are your own leaders." Mahatma Gandhi

SAVE ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD

Camp AARDVARK (Arboreal Activists Reinforce Decent Values Against Redevelopment Killing) has been set up to protect St Mary's Churchyard, "the very last green open space in Southampton", from being developed by a partnership of Church of England plc, the higher education establishment and the usual property speculators. Base Camp and houses in some of the 40 mature trees are already up and running. Plans reveal most of this beautiful churchyard being covered in buildings and tarmac.

Aardvarkers are all from Southampton - one was christened in the church - and the campaign has loads of local support, but wouldn't mind some climbing gear too, and visitors. The Council has final say on the proposal, so we plan to make very clear to them that people wish to preserve the site as is.

DOLLY IN SHOCK KIDNAP

Apparently modern-day sheep-rustlers have their eye on Dolly the cloned sheep. Security has been tightened around the Roslin Institute, in Midlothian, and police have been alerted, after warning was received from a mystery group who stated "The cloning of a sheep is against nature and our objective is to kidnap Dolly, neuter the animal and release her among a flock of sheep..."

This is a monthly round-up of ecological direct action news and forthcoming events in Britain.

There is more about Earth First! inside this newsletter, as well as a list of contacts.



SCOTTISH ANTI OPEN-CAST

Donald Dewar, Secretary of State for Scotland, was recently given a 'souvenir' from Coalburn by the Scottish Opencast Action Group: two full carrier bags of coal dust were handed over at the Scottish Office with the message, "Collected from the lungs of children living next to opencasts. There's more where this came from!" Scotland is more threatened by opencast now than ever before as opencast companies see Scotland as having laxer planning laws and fewer people to object. The demo, to the tune of pipes and drums, coincided with 'Minerals '98 - Making More of Life', a UK-wide week to "celebrate mineral extraction". Said a Coalburn local - "It is outrageous that Minerals '98 have been given £64,000 by the DTI and Department of the Environment to 'celebrate' opencasts! No-one is giving a penny or a thought for the communities whose lives are made miserable by all the traffic, dust and noise." Contact SCAG - 01501 785202

LOVE-IN AT ROSLIN

The idea: to hold a celebration of the Diversity of Life in the grounds of the Roslin Institute, near Edinburgh, where Dolly the sheep was cloned. It's time we got heard - time to take action - 2 days of celebrating biodiversity - bring your imagination & leave your inhibitions.... The plan: to have a mass (nude) invasion of the grounds, with loads of interesting and thought-provoking performance, costumes, musicians etc, and then....who knows? It will raise in a simple and direct way all the moral & ethical implications....imagine if we get arrested for performing natural procreation, whilst Frankenstein scientists open Pandora's box. Contact Gwynned & Mon EF!

50th edition of hippy bathday @ 5*

INFILTRATOR (REALLY)

From A SEED Europe: "It has been brought to our attention through various sources that Adrian Franks of Eco-Action France [& EF! France] is an infiltrator selling information on activist groups to corporate clients. He has claimed to be working very closely with organisations and networks (such as Corporate Watch UK), but is almost unknown to them. To his clients he acts under the surnames Mayer and Lechene. His intelligence agency, Risk Crisis Analysis, is registered in both France and the UK under Adrian Lechene. According to sources, he has created a corporate-oriented information-market on the activities of European activists. We have made clear to the companies he was in touch with that much of the information they received was inaccurate and that they will receive nothing further." For further information on his activities, and the investigation, go to <www.xs4all.nl/~respub/adrian>

THIS IS TAPP

Tyneside Action for People and Planet, known to their friends as TAPP, are up to all sorts.

On National Bike to Work Day, activists dressed as security guards leafleted cars in the city centre with official looking 'Vehicle Immobilisation Notices', identifying them as dangerous. Cars parked at the Department of Environment headquarters were particularly targeted - one day surely isn't much too expect from them after all - but the DoE responded by reporting TAPP for littering!

Other TAPP projects: monthly cycling actions are being held to claim back a cycle route under ownership of the road construction firm Robert McAlpine; the plight of 160 mature trees about to die in the name of road widening is being highlighted, and "Country Watch" is taking action against animal snares and farm animal abuses.

CZECH RTS: "WORST POLICE VIOLENCE SINCE 68"

Two months on, Prague's Global Street Party is still making the pages of the newspapers, which describe it as the biggest confrontation between demonstrators and police in Czechoslovakia for ten years, and the scene of the worst police violence since 1968. It occurred late in the day, when police moved in on the crowd with truncheons, eventually detaining and interrogating 64 people, a third of whom were under 18, some for up to two weeks. Reports say that while injured people were taken to the hospital, police continued mistreating them there even in the presence of physicians. Media and human rights organisations (who have all made statements that the rights of those detained were infringed) were not allowed access. Despite all of this, officials have now stated there will be no police charged for any breaches of law. However, there is a lot of public awareness and anger about their behaviour on the day, and they will be in the spotlight at Prague's next party, on 29th September (meet 2pm, Palackeho square).

Meanwhile, the activists being charged are in desperate need of donations to help with legal fees, and ask also that people in the UK make formal complaints to the Czech embassy about the state's handling of the party. Send donations c/o Czech EF!

MENWITH HILL INDEPENDENCE DAY

On American Independence Day, the dodgy types at Menwith Hill spy base traditionally invite local dignitaries to drop in for tea. Menwith Hill women activists made it a bit more difficult this year, holding a mobile picnic on the public footpath that crosses the visitors' car-park driveway, and releasing helium balloons with petitions attached to them, protesting against the Cassini Probe which carries 72.3 pounds of plutonium.

Meanwhile, the current expansion of Menwith Hill, recently taken over by US Space Command, continues - and the new 'golf balls' are specifically for receiving infra-red pictures from satellites.

GENETIC SNOWBALL

On July 4th five women safely and openly removed GE crops from a field release site in Oxfordshire. This action launched the genetiX snowball, which aims to inspire growing numbers of people to accountably and openly remove GE plants. Despite a hefty police presence, the women pulled up 200 plants before being arrested for criminal damage. The women placed the plants in marked bags and contacted the Environment Agency, asking them to dispose of the crops as biohazardous waste. Police later released the women without charge. The women had previously openly declared their intention to pull up the plants to farmers, crop owners Monsanto, and the police. The women left behind personal statements of their reasons for taking the action and a pledge of nonviolence, accountability, and respect for human life and the environment. Monsanto are now seeking injunctions against the five women, banning them from "interfering" with crops on any of their 70 listed British release sites, and asking for unlimited damages...unfortunately for the gene dictators, there are others all too happy to "interfere". On July 18th a second snowball action was planned, but it turned out that the farmer had already stopped growing GE crops because he distrusted the technology! Groups around the country have taken up the invitation to take part in further rounds, expected on the first and third Saturdays of each month. To take part contact genetiX snowball for a campaign pack.

LONDON RTS DO IT PROPERLY

While New Labour announced their White Paper on Transport, which says little about the rights of pedestrians and cyclists, London Reclaim the Streets solved all our problems with their Green, Black and Red paper. It bans private cars from city centres, redirects the saved money into making public transport free, rules that car ads must carry a government health warning, and converts the M25 into the world's largest circular organic allotment. Simultaneously there occurred a large-scale subverting round of London billboards in order to redecorate Ford's latest advertisements with tube maps and bicycle posters to celebrate the paper's release. Hoorah.

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EPAU, Dept 20, 1, Newton Street, Manchester M1 1HW <actionupdate@gn.apc.org> subscribe via email for free EPA Website: <http://www.k2net.co.uk/ol/earthfirst.html>

NEWS IN BRIEF

After 7 years, the EFAU has reached its 50th birthday! To celebrate this fact, the evolution of the movement and how the Update has reflected this, the 'EFAU' 50 Reader is being put together. We need ideas, comments, any amusing or good unpublished photos, distribution help. Contact us via Manchester EPI! Laminated stickers also now available, 10p each or contact us for bulk orders.

A local FoE anti-quarry campaigner & one other have been found guilty of "conspiracy to cause criminal damage and recklessly endanger life". This follows the cutting of the railway line out of Whitley Quarry in September '96. The decision's being appealed before the (stiff) sentencing, due late August. Meanwhile, ARC are appealing the stop to the expansion plans.

It all got a bit mixed up at the recent Salisbury RTS. Party-goers found themselves sharing 2 stalled tanks with soldiers and discussing the ethics of going out and shooting people, as the traffic piled up...

Worthing residents celebrated the 21st anniversary of the arrival of CCTV, making the public the focus of their own handmade CCTV cameras, and presenting a birthday cake to one of the real ones. Crime has risen by 19% in the town since the cameras were put up.

The EPI & RTS websites have had to move. See the bottom of the contact list for the new address.

At the suggestion of local FoE and Worthing Borough Council, two neighbourhoods celebrated Green Transport Week by organising their own community street parties. Turfed-over tarmac, sandpits, and a trampoline replaced the traffic. Funds raised will go to community projects.

Huntingdon Life Sciences, the UK's biggest contract animal testing laboratory, have lost their second largest shareholder, and half the workforce at the Cheshire lab are to be made redundant. To help keep up the pressure to close it down, contact HDSC.

At Faslane, although the local Council won the appeal against the peace camp and could evict immediately, they've contacted camp residents to ask for 'talks' in August. Faslane locals are intrigued, but remain on alert.

Do you live in mid-Wales or the English borders? Interested in the eco non-violent direct action movement but frustrated by the sparsity of like minds in this very rural and lowly-populated area? Contact Hereford EPI!

Arthur's Wood, the new Manchester Airport camp is in need of enough dwellers to start another camp, plus usual polyprop donations etc. 3 people were arrested and bailed off site.

DOWN THE TUBE

On the morning of the RMT rail trade union strike by 10,000 workers, London activists climbed onto the roof of a tube train at Bank and shut down the eastbound Central Line, in support of the tubeworkers' stand against privatisation. 'Fat cats' offered to buy Bank station, handing out peanuts and explanatory leaflets to passengers. Underground (corporate greed) signs were subverted to read "Laughing all the way to the Bank". Three activists were arrested, charged and released later the same day.

HILLGROVE HULLABALOO

The mass demo on 11 July against Hillgrove Farm, breeders of cats for vivisection, was supposed to start with a rally, followed by a protest at the farm. But Witney Carnival was on, and police didn't want animal rights protesters mingling with 'real' people! So they put a 5 mile exclusion zone around Witney, under the Public Order Act '86. A change of plan - hundreds of protesters gathered at a service station near Oxford to march into the city centre towards the University, where the cats go. A small group got past the police into the city, and 2 larger groups held impromptu street parties. All met up at a major roundabout, and occupied it for some time, before being ushered back to the services. Legal advice suggests the exclusion zone was unlawful. Hillgrove will close down; it's only a matter of time.

POLISH ANTI-ROAD CAMP HIT

At 4am on June 4, the eviction and clearance of Polish EPI's St Anna mountain camp began, with residents isolated by a barrier and an official media ban. Over several days activists were violently removed by about 85 anti-terrorist police and climbers. Many trees were felled with their occupants still in them, and 24 arrests were made. On the final evening, activists planned to stay on the ground to continue resistance, but were attacked by the local skinhead group. Later, after collecting those who had been arrested, campaigners moved on - to occupy two houses in the nearby village of Wysoka, further along the proposed route. By the

Elsewhere, a group calling themselves the 'Wardens of Wiltshire' pulled up another lot of Monsanto's GE rape. Police came along but no arrests were made. Whilst 12 people did the decontamination work, 25 other locals came along to offer support, one saying: "We and others before us are neither 'eco-warriors' nor 'super heroes'. We are simply concerned mothers, fathers & other ordinary people that are unwilling to accept Monsanto force-feeding us genetically engineered crops - or their expensive and misleading PR campaign that is trying to sell them to us." That is the 27th site to be rescued from GE crops, and as yet no charges of criminal damage have been pressed by any of the biotech companies involved.

And finally, a blackbird & friends announced they'd be landing on a GE field in Tyneside, only to find someone had already harvested the rape - poor hungry bird.

TEIGNGRACE

400 people, including David Bellamy and therefore the TV cameras, turned out in the rain for the Teigngrace National Rally, to walk through (?) rivers. Latest development there was when the quarry company who wants to dig up the place, realised that the upcoming public inquiry may get them in trouble for bulldozing Twynoye Farm, which, as the home of a Saxon lord, is mentioned in the Domesday Book. So they returned to the scene of the crime to dig up the foundations in the hope of destroying its historical significance once and for all. Luckily they were spotted and an injunction was taken out to stop their sneaky vandalism.

RIGHT OF WAY

South Downs folk again took the government at their word and took back their 'freedom to roam' - 200 people mass-trespassed and camped over, reclaiming areas incorrectly signposted "Private - No Right of Way" and picnicking on Balmer Down, which dates back to the Iron Age. Walkers expressed shock at recent wanton destruction of hundreds-of-years-old beeches on Offham Down, but were impressed at the rapid recovery of the herb-rich turf, rescued from ploughing by campaigning last year. Only 10 of Brighton Council's wildlife-rich old down pasture sites have formal public access, though all 53 are supposed to. Take them back on the regular trespass days.

EVENTS

AUGUST

- 1 Sheffield Acoustic Not Another RTS: the spirit of the old 70s jubilee street parties, minus the Queen - meet noon, Fitzalan Sq
- 1 Huntingdon National Demo - meet noon, Wilsford BR station, Manchester
- 1-9 Walk for Peace (Brussels-Faslane) Scottish leg, anti-nuke actions on the way - Grace 01555 820400
- 1-17 Ecotopia Camp, transport focus - contact UmProWe, Merzhausenstr. 150/7, 79100 Freiburg, Germany +49-761-55408 <umweltwerkstatt@3landbox.comlink.apc.org>
- 2 South Downs Mass Trespass - call 'The Land is Ours' 01273 388392
- 7-9 West Country Activist Gathering, £5, location TBA - info 01626 363844, 01404 814082 to offer workshops, £, or a hand
- 12 Grouse shooting season starts - call HSA
- 15 Faslane Action
- 15 Bristol RTS - meet noon Eastville Park
- 15 Lift Off Day - meet 12 noon Gardner St, Brighton, removing cars from pavements
- 11-25 Trident 2000 Disarmament Camp
- 16-31 Globalisation and Resistance seminar, Geneva <playfair@asta.rwth-aachen.de>
- 19-23 Northern Green Gathering, near Pontefract, W Yorks - 0113 224 9885
- 23 South Downs Mass Trespass - as above
- 29-31 Ashton Court quarry weekend of action
- 29-1 Diversity of Life Celebration, Roslin

SEPTEMBER

- 5 York Peace Festival, 01904 642943
- 9-14 Earth First! National Gathering, Dorset, contact via Leeds EPI!
- 16-20 Faith and Resistance Gathering II - contact 0171 6631000
- 26-Oct 3 Abolition Days and Citizens Inspections - 0171 700 2393 for local action info
- 30-1 Oct Big Anti-Nuke Action, evening briefing, Leicester, transport to an exciting venue the next morning - 0113 262 9365

CRITICAL MASS

Birmingham - first Saturday each month, Victoria Square, 12 noon
 Manchester - last Friday each month, St Peter's Square, 5pm
 Glasgow - last Saturday, Byres Road/University Avenue, 2pm
 Edinburgh - last Friday, the Mound, 5.30pm

the arrival of CC-TV, making the point the focus of animal rights protesters mingling with 'real' people. So they put a 5 mile exclusion zone around Witney, under the Public Order Act '86. A change of plan - hundreds of protesters gathered at a service station near Oxford to march into the city centre towards the University, where the cats go. A small group got past the police into the city, and 2 larger groups held impromptu street parties. All met up at a major roundabout, and occupied it for some time, before being ushered back to the services. Legal advice suggests the exclusion zone was unlawful. Hillgrove will close down; it's only a matter of time.

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If you attended either of the parties in Brixton or Tottenham, RTS need your help. There were several arrests and a couple of police assaults on partygoers. Phone RTS ASAP, 0171 281 4261 or 0961 398257

London RTS are putting together a book about the RTS movement. Contributions welcome: photographs, press cuttings etc (will be returned). Send to John, RTS, 75 Kito Rd, Telegraph Hill, London SE12 5TN, or <artactivism@gm.apc.org>

Although the McLibel appeal date is not until 1999, they have two weeks to lodge their appeal bundles - all 200,000 pages - and pay £20,000 pounds extra for transcripts! And if they don't? Appeal struck out.

Undercurrents 10 underway for November release. If you know of a story that needs telling, or want support in making your own feature, get in touch.

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CRYSTAL PALACE SPRING

"Spring is definitely in the air here at Big Willow Eco Village at Crystal Palace, and it has brought with it two things - sex and plants. The first is irritating eco-warriors pairing up and taking off in a romantic haze thinking of each other, instead of the eviction. The second means that the plants have grown so tall all over the site that its almost impossible to recognise it!" The owners of the development site have asked the campaigners to leave, not as a result of the tidings of Spring, of course, and as we go to press the decision over whether a Judicial Review of the scheme can go ahead will be taken. Unusual tunnels are at the ready if the legal system plays its usual tricks.

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ASHTON COURT'S STILL THERE

The police tried to evict Ashton Court protest camp if they didn't leave by the Ashton Court Festival weekend seems to have been a lot of hot air. Local activists sat down one camp, but the other went on alert ready to resist forcible removal...which never happened. So the campaign is back in full swing, ready for September's 'habitat translocation'. That's where Pioneer Quarry company arrange to slice off the top layer of the meadow and put it somewhere else, on different soil; thereby "protecting" the 89 species that just possibly liked their habitat where it was. To help stop this nonsense, contact the camp on their mobile phone.

BARN BUNGLE

Undercover cops who'd set up a secret camera in a Tayside farm's barn and parked up in their unmarked car, hoping to catch some of the Scottish folk who are decontaminating their country by removing genetics test crops, had to run for their lives when the car exhaust set the barn on fire. Both the barn and the car were destroyed, and the damage is estimated to be well into the thousands...a police spokesman is quoted as saying,

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- Edinburgh - last Friday, the Mound, 5.30pm
- Exeter - last Friday, Paris St Cafe, by the bus stop, 5.15pm
- Newcastle - first Monday, 6pm, Monument, Gateshead (see main article)

THE EFi! ACTION UPDATE

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At a peaceful blockade of a barge at a Nigerian oil installation (owned by US multinational Chevron), Chevron-hired soldiers shot and killed two protesters and wounded 30 more. Chevron has devastated the ecology and communities of Ondo. See Njaja@compuserve.com

The Liverpool Dockers, compelled to end their 30 month dispute, will still struggle against exploitation and casualisation, here and globally. They led the London 'March for Social Justice' in May, and more is planned - call 0181 372 0908

At the BNRR, the Brum fire brigade & ambulance service have been told by police not to come to the aid of protesters - there'll be 'urine & flea grenades waiting'. Yegads, those violent terrorist protesters again...

PRISONERS

Chris Garrett (Scouse Chris), CL 4664 HMP Altcourse, Fazakerley, Liverpool L9 7LH, on remand for charges relating to the Manchester Airport protest.

of 1999-2002, rather than the proposed route. By the time the month the bulldozers followed. They were originally held off by a barrage of stones from the rooftops, but eventually both houses were destroyed, once again with protesters still in them. Resistance will continue - further info and a video are available from EFi Poland.

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IN-GENE-UNITY

Direct action came to the Royal Agricultural Show when the 'Kenilworth Croppers' openly cut 75% of a GE display crop. The wheat, produced for 'improved bread making qualities', had been kept under close guard at the show all week, following the safe 'decontamination' of a GE wheat field at Cereals '98. The wheat contains antibiotic marker genes, which could lead to antibiotic resistance in humans, and which the government's own advisory body has ruled as unsafe and so banned from future experiments. The developers have ignored the warning and are continuing to display their wheat as part of a 'public education project'.

A group of rambles on an evening stroll in the countryside last week were most surprised and alarmed to find that the footpath they were following near a farm, near Ponteland, was blocked by a crop of genetically manipulated oil seed rape. The rambles, disgusted that this unpredictable, uncontrollable, unnecessary, unwanted and dangerous crop was being grown in the north east, had no alternative but to destroy it, to stop the spread of pollen and help end the Genetic Experiment. RAGE! Rambles against genetic engineering.

DISCLAIMER: THE EDITORS OF THE EFi AU DO NOT ENCOURAGE ILLEGAL ACTION. THE AU IS FOR INFO PURPOSES ONLY

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UKRAINIAN RAINBOW KEEPERS

Members of Rainbow Keepers and Tira Nigra were regularly terrorized by Ukrainian Security Service (USS, the former Ukrainian KGB) while attempting to organize actions against the recent Annual Meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in Kiev. USS officers threatened to use physical violence against anybody participating in actions. Eventually, after a banner and leaflet action, 5 activists were arrested without a warrant and sentenced to several days in jail, where they went on hunger strike against their treatment. This kind of treatment is not new to Ukrainian campaigners, many of whom have experienced interrogation and have had homes raided & belongings confiscated....

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From: EFiAU, Dept
29, 1 Newton Street,
Manchester M1 1HW

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